

YOU HAVE a CHOICE!

Someone pushes you in the lunch line and spills milk on your new shirt. You are furious! How do you handle your anger? You might be surprised to realize that each of us may deal with conflict in different ways.

Avoidance

Sometimes we avoid conflict rather than deal with a problem. We may pretend the problem doesn't exist, or pretend we are not upset, or give in to be agreeable.

Some people call this a soft response, because the problem is not resolved, and no one wins.

Confrontation

Another way to face conflict is to confront a problem directly. Sometimes this is a good response, when we look at the problem honestly. But sometimes we just get angry, blow up, and fight. Often, one person wins and the other loses. This is called a hard response.

Problem solving

With this response, everyone's feelings and ideas are listened to. People work together to solve a problem so that each person is satisfied. This kind of response lets everyone win. It's a win-win response.

When there is a conflict, what do you do?

AVOID THE PROBLEM— SOFT RESPONSE

Give in?
Act "nice"?
Walk away?
Don't say
what you feel?

CONFRONT THE PROBLEM— HARD RESPONSE

Look at the problem
honestly?
Then try to work it out.
Or: Shove and kick?
Scream and yell?
Threaten? Call names?

SOLVE THE PROBLEM— WIN-WIN

Share your opinion
and feelings?
Listen carefully?
Talk it out?
Cooperate and
compromise?

Adapted from an article by Elizabeth H. Phillips-Hershey and Barbara Kanagy Mitchell